SPEECH

OF

THE REV. W. KNIBB,

At a Meeting of the Newcastle Auxiliary to the Baptist Missionary Society, held in Brunswick Place Chapel, Jan. 24, 1833.

[on Slavery]

It is with the utmost pleasure that I appear before you this evening for the purpose of proposing a resolution, the adoption of which lies very near my heart. In doing so it will be my duty to advert to the causes which led to the late insurrection in Jamaica, to the means taken by the planters to implicate the Missionaries in it, to the triumphant manner in which they repelled the base insinuation upon their characters, and to advocate, at the same time, the cause of the hapless negro, who has been robbed of his liberty, the inalienable birth-right of man.

In the word of God we are taught to remember those who are in bonds as being bound with them: if this precept has a right influence upon our minds, it will teach us to remember our fellow-christian in Jamaica with the same sympathetic affection and the same ardent desire for his good, as if we were placed in similar circumstances. It will teach us to remember our African brother as if the chains were upon our brother, or as if the chains which our African sister wore were our own. It is not upon political principles that I appear before you; with politics here I have nothing to do. I view slavery as a sin, as a daring usurpation of the power of God, and of the right of man; and viewing it as a sin I cannot but advocate its immediate and total abolition. If it is a sin, we have no right to palliate it for a moment; if it is not a sin, we have no right to meddle with the question at all. If man can claim property in his brother man, we have no right to touch it; but I deny that man can have property in man; I assert that man has no right to sell his fellow man. All I ask for my African brother is, that he may stand in the scale of beings as man; all I ask for my African sister is, that she may call her husband and her children her own; all I ask for them both is, that they bow together before that God in whom we live, and move, and have our being.

One remark which I would make before entering on the subject is this,—whatever may have been my views of Colonial Slavery, during the eight years which I was in Jamaica, I never made them known; the same principle kept me silent there, which makes me speak out here—firm, unflinching duty. Whilst I was in Jamaica, it was my duty to instruct the ignorant, to lead sinners to Christ; but now that I have been driven from my post of duty, another branch of service devolves upon me.

Before I left Jamaica, I told the planters how I would act: three weeks prior to my leaving I called upon them publicly in the newspapers, and told them that if they had any thing wherewith to accuse me, to do it before I left the island, for on returning to England I would speak out, but nothing did they lay to my charge, and long before this have they found out that I have kept to my word. No! there I entombed the tender emotions of my soul. I have seen my fellow-creatures bought and sold, from the infant, clinging with fond affection to the breast of its mother, down to the grey-headed pilgrim stepping into eternity. I have seen men, women, and children, chained to each other, eating the corn with which horses are fed. I have exchanged it with my sister in the Redeemer, without ever telling her that she was hardly used. But now that I am in the land of liberty, I will advocate their cause; I will plead for them and for them I will pray, and never will my soul be satisfied till we can wave the flag of liberty over injured Africa, and sing the dirge of slavery.

I shall now proceed to state what were the causes of the insurrection in Jamaica; and I may remind you that I have for four months spread these statements before the British public, but never have the planters brought forward the least evidence to disprove a single word of my statement, though abundance of time has elapsed for them to do so.

Prior to the insurrection taking place, meetings were being held in different parts of the island, praying to be absolved from their allegiance to the British Crown. The planters, thinking that the slaves were about to be set free, and that what they called their property was about to be torn from them, often expressed themselves foolishly and rashly, not in some instances refraining from denominating the efforts of the government at home to ameliorate the condition of the slave, treasonable.

I have since discovered that the slaves sent down deputations to report what their

masters had said at these meetings, and that meeting from time to time at Retrieve, they were told that the King of England had made them free, but that their masters wanted to keep their liberty from them. On receiving this intelligence, they came to the resolution not to work without wages after Christmas. We have heard a great deal about the insurrection being planned in Baptist Chapels, but Samuel Shark, who planned the whole of it himself, told me that this was its origin.

A second cause of the insurrection was this: planters lolling over their convivial boards, were in the habit of talking about the efforts of the Anti-Slavery party in England, and with reference to these efforts, some of them had said they hoped every planter would shed the last drop of his blood before he suffered the slaves to be free. These conversations were carried on in presence of their servants, who soon communicated the tidings to their fellow-slaves, Sometimes, also, when the overseers laid down a man to be flogged, they would taunt him thus: "I know you are to be free soon, but I will get it out of you first." Another cause was the rejection in the House of Assembly of a bill that was framed for facilitating the manumission of slaves. But the most provoking of all was this, and I had it from the lips of Edw. Hilson; he told me that they had read eight years before in the English newspapers that this nation would not submit to have female slaves flogged. In the month of September, about four months before the insurrection broke out, a bill was introduced into the Assembly to abolish this practice, but it was thrown out, twenty-five voting against it, and only three for it: the practice being declared essential to the continuation of slavery. On one estate which shewed signs of insubordination (they did not actually rebel, there being Christians among them)—this was the sole cause: a female slave had been laid down to be flogged, her husband rose up and said he would not allow it; that it was high time that the flogging of females was done away with altogether: for this *he* was flogged. Now, I ask, was not the man doing right? was he not doing right in protecting the wife of his bosom from exposure and from torture? was it not his bounden duty, imposed on him by the laws of God and of man, to throw his arms around her and shield the mother of his children from the murderous cart-whip?—What being is there in the shape of a man who would not do the same? If there be, I would say, make him the slave; flog him as a slave; transport him to Jamaica, and there let him enjoy to his soul's content all the blessings of Colonial Slavery. It has been said by one man that all the plantations on which the Baptists preached were burnt. I am the only Baptist Missionary who preached upon the plantations, and I can only say, that of the 77 plantations over which my congregation was scattered, not one of them was burnt; they all remain to this day unharmed, the monuments of the falsity of the statement. Another person ascribes the insurrection to the unconstitutional interference of the British Parliament, and the concessions of the Assembly of Jamaica: but what have they conceded? not even the flogging of women with the cart-whip!

The truth is, that not only did the Christian slaves keep from burning, themselves, the estates of their masters, but in many instances caused others to refrain, and in many continued at work during the whole period of the insurrection. This was the case on Oxford estate, where Edward Barrett brought his fellow-bondsmen regularly to their task, and was also the means of saving the property of a neighbouring estate. On the Cambridge estate, George Prince of Wales kept the property of his master for a month, and delivered up the stores faithfully at the end of that time, not a particle of sugar or rum being missing. Charles Campbell, on the Western Favell estate, was called up by the overseer, and asked what I had been telling him? saying, I know your parson has told you to rebel; he, however, delivered up the keys of the stores to him, saying that he expected all would be destroyed by the time he returned. At the end of a month he again gave up the keys into the hands of the inspector, every thing being safe and sound, adding, significantly, "That is what the parson told me." This man obtained his liberty for his services. I have abundance of documents which completely exonerate the Missionaries. The Hon Wm. Miller, who has the charge of about eighty estates, and in whose parish I lived, states that on first coming out to Jamaica he had made frequent inquiries amongst the people whether the Missionaries had held out any prospects of freedom, and had been always answered in the negative.

The free population have acted nobly, and they are the persons whose testimony should chiefly be relied on. They assemble with us in our places of worship, the whites never do. The whites know nothing of what passes in the sectarian chapels; or, rather, they seem to know more than ourselves, for one person had stated, in evidence, that we had told the slaves that when the stars jumped into the moon, the King would sign the charter of their freedom. The free and coloured, in a resolution which they came to, in a meeting publicly convened for this purpose, bear testimony to the spirit of opposition which the planters had for years manifested towards the Missionaries, and declare their disgust at the attempts that have been made without one shadow of proof to malign the Missionaries,—that, but for their interference, the insurrection would have been much more general; and that they merited the thanks, not the opprobrium of the

colonists. They state, moreover, that they are satisfied that the rebellion was owing to the resolutions of the planters themselves, adopted at their parochial meetings in the colony.

I must now advert to the means made use of to implicate us. In the first place, they took our persons, and treated us with every indignity that hellish device could bring forth. I was myself taken 22 miles, under a meridian Sun, in a boat, my feet soaked in water most of the time, and when I fell, from fatigue, a bayonet was presented to my breast with the threat that I should be run through if I did not instantly rise. Next, our houses were searched, and every paper that they could find was ransacked, even the most confidential intercourse between husband and wife, and parents and children. Hence, they cannot say that they did not make use of every means to destroy us, though we are told we owe our lives to their moderation. Next, they imprisoned our poor members, whom they dragged from their homes and chained in the most loathsome dungeons. But though their attempts were continued for eighteen or twenty days, not one could they find amongst the 1600 slaves connected with us in that part of the island, that would say a single word against their Minister. Not one amongst them was found, though their backs have bled for the testimony which they bore. So far from implicating us by a false testimony, they did what they could to uphold us under our sufferings. One poor man came to me, and supposing I was in want, offered me his all, adding, at the same time, "Keep up your heart Minister, those that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution." One of my brother Missionaries passing by the grating of the prison where the slaves were confined, was called by them, and they said to him, "We do not feel for ourselves, we shall soon be with Jesus, but for you." He has heard these poor men cramped up in places unfit for brutes, singing,

"Dear Lord, remember me."

The next means they used was to steal our Bible. George Gordon, a public magistrate, who, along with the son of a clergyman, assisted in burning our chapel, at Salter's-hill (a chapel nearly as large as this, which had been only once preached in), took the Bible, and doubled down the leaf at the 8th chapter of Joshua; this was brought in evidence against us, it being stated that we had said, that the Jews meant the Negroes, and that if they would lie in ambush we would deliver the island into their hands. It is worthy of observation, that this same chapter came in the regular order of the lessons of the Church of England, and was read in the church, in the town of Montego Bay. The last means they used was dark, hellish bribery. When, after seven or eight weeks' trial, the Missionaries' character remained yet unsullied, they had recourse to bribery. They called a free negro of the name of Samuel Stennett, and told him they would give him 10*l.* a-year for life, and 50*l.* down, if he would bear witness against us. Upon the false testimony of this man, my brother Missionaries Burchell and Gardner, were sent to gaol, and I was kept on bail, the testimony against me not being quite so strong. We went to prayer; our brethren belonging to our several congregations did the same; they resolved to hold a prayer-meeting every day at twelve o'cock, to intercede on our behalf; and let the Christian hear the result, and trust in a prayer-hearing God. Five or six days before the time of trial came on (and they could have hanged us upon his testimony), this man sent for some gentlemen, and said, "It is all a lie I have told of the Ministers, they never told us that the slaves were to be free and that they should not work. It was two magistrates and two other gentlemen told me they would give me 10*l.* a-year for life, and 50*l.* down if I would do it; I make this confession to relieve my burdened conscience." This confession he delivered upon oath, and he was afterwards tried for perjury. Thus were we delivered from the snare of the fowler—thus did the Lord protect his servants who trusted in him—thus does he make the wrath of man to praise him, the remainder thereof he restraineth. He suffered them to go so far in their nefarious designs to show to what lengths they were ready to go if permitted, but there he stopped them and said, "Here let thy proud waves be staid." We have published the names of the persons concerned in this transaction, and they have never attempted to disprove the allegation, and, until they wipe away this foul blot from their character, how can their word be regarded.

Who was it, too, that pulled down our chapels? It was not slaves, it was magistrates, officers of militia, and clergymen.

Having now exonerated ourselves, I must plead the cause of the poor slave. But I must first tell you that there are different kinds of slaves in the West Indies; the least miserable are the household slaves. I say the least miserable, because all are miserable. Make a man's mess of pottage as nice as you please, and take away his birthright—liberty—as the price of it, and he is but a miserable wretch after all. These slaves belong to those who employ them, or are hired out from other slave-holders. Many in the West Indies get their existence by letting slaves on hire; there are the hands of slaves who not only get their own keep, but support their masters in luxury, the persons employing them giving their owners generally about 8*s.* 4*d.* per week, procuring provision for the slaves besides. Some slaves pay 2*l.* per month to their masters to have the liberty of doing what work they like; after having paid this sum, they have to provide for themselves and families besides. The man that made the coat I have on me, [illegible]

two dollars for himself, and ten shillings for his wife, every week of his life before he begins to earn anything wherewith to feed and to clothe his children; yet such is his industry, that he pays this amount regularly into the hands of his guilty oppressor. But the majority of slaves are plantation slaves: these work in the cultivation of the sugar, and have then to labour to support themselves. The planters often tell us that they support their slaves; but that is a great falsehood, and nothing less than a falsehood, and they who utter it know it to be such. The fact is, they have a salt herring a day for their work, and nothing more. If a slave is fed, and if he is comfortable, he has to work hard for it on Saturday and on Sunday. I will prove this from evidence given before the House of Commons during the last session of Parliament. But first I must offer a few remarks respecting the religious instruction which is said to be communicated to the slaves. We hear a great deal about the anxiety of some of the planters for the instruction of their slaves, and of bishops, and of schools, and of churches; but what though the churches were as numerous as the stars of heaven, so long as the negro is prevented from entering? Those who tell us so much of these preparations for the instruction of the negro, tell us that before he can be set free he must be made religious. I hope that none of you are of this opinion. If the slaves were to think that we retained that, after which they so eagerly pant, which they earnestly beg at your hands as a boon, and which they will soon take by main force if it be not given to them, we would soon have an island full of hypocrites. I now will appeal to the documents referred to.—One slave-holder, himself a zealous member of the Church of England, says, upon evidence before the House of Commons, that religious instruction is not generally given to the slaves—that all attempts to do so are thwarted by the planters; the most of them only allow of oral instruction; this he considers a mere farce, and little time is allowed even for it. This instruction, too, is only given by the book-keepers. Their lives, as well as that of the whites, generally is most scandalous; and yet this is the plan of instruction which a christian bishop has recommended. Another slaveholder says, that if a slave does not work on Sunday he starves. He says, it is not possible for them to do without working on Sunday; and he gives it as his opinion that the appointment of a bishop has impeded the progress of instruction in Jamaica, because the bishop has thought it dangerous to interfere with the vices of the people.—He says, that to speak candidly, and he is himself a zealous member of the church, the sectarians are the fittest persons for carrying on the work of instruction. Such is the testimony of slave-holders. The enemies of the slave, ought to have learnt long ere this, that their strong fort is silence. Sir John King, a pro-slavery witness, on being interrogated, could not say there was one slave in the schools at Jamaica. In one part of his testimony, he says, the slaves have become excessively enlightened; that he had observed considerable improvement in their morals; and yet, in another place, he says, that they are liars and thieves, and that they indulge in every licentious practice. It is true that there are schools in every town, and in almost every village in Jamaica, but they are frequented not by the slaves, but by the free blacks, for there are 50,000 free persons of colour on the island.

The next topic I will advert to is that of free labour. We are told that slaves are not fit for freedom, because they will not work if they are free. This statement is untrue, and it is not more unjust to the slave than it is libellous to the character of the Divine Being, as it supposes that he created beings not fit for the enjoyment of the common boon of our nature—liberty. If the tenderest emotions which actuate our bosoms—if an ardent love to Christ—if an exemplification of every tender emotion of love unparalleled of parents to children—if an undeviating love to their minister amidst dungeons and racks, can stimulate a man to exertion, the slaves are not unfit for liberty, for being free they will not be idle. If the pulling down of chapels—if the tarring of innocent Missionaries—if the combining a perjured, unholy alliance to bind up the march of mind—if to say to the servants of God, "thus far shalt thou go and no further"—if to act as the magistrates of Jamaica are doing at this moment, constitute a fitness for liberty, I will proclaim the negro unfit for the enjoyment of the blessing.

Again, they say the negro is unfit for liberty, because he is so wicked. Slavery is, indeed, the fruitful source of every crime, but name what crime you like, and I will demonstrate that it is more indulged in by the slave-owner than the slaves. The gross licentiousness that prevails through the length and the breadth of the land, makes the island fitly compared to the land of Sodom and Gomorrah; and, when I remember that the slave-owner comes from a land of Bibles, a land of Christian light, and has, perhaps, in his infancy, been taught the doctrines of the Gospel, and to lisp out prayers to his Maker; who can estimate his guilt in the eyes of that Being who judgeth according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not? To the slave has been given one talent, and, for improving that one, he has been lacerated and flogged. The planters perpetually say, the people will not work: but they do work. This clamour is as old as Pharaoh; we do exceedingly wrong if we give the credit of the invention of it to the slave-owner. When God said, "let my people go free," Pharaoh cried, "more bricks, more bricks." To the demands of the law of God, the planter only responds, "more sugar, more sugar": and to the entreaties of the slave, and to the remonstrances of Britain, he only replies, "ye are idle, ye are idle." I have known slaves work when

they have become free; nay, more, I defy any one to shew me any negro that did not work when he was made free. I take high ground, because I know it to be true. It is contrary to common sense, reason, and fact, to suppose that a man will not work when you give him an inducement to work. Take as an instance:—Richard Brown, in the town of Falmouth. He obtained his liberty, and did he become idle?—of course!—he worked hard to procure the enlargement of his wife, for whose liberty he gave the sum of £80.; then, so idle did he become, that he bought a piece of ground, and built on it a house; and, then, so bereft did he become of every right feeling, that he took his aged mother to his home, he fed and clothed her, he soothed her latter days and, with his own hands, closed her eyes, and I buried her. I will revert to the case of another individual, whose liberty I was enabled, through the kindness of some female friends in this country, to purchase. This man was most cruelly flogged. How do I know it? My own eyes witnessed it! I saw him thrown prostrate on the ground; I saw him held firmly to the spot; I saw the murderous whip go on his back, and I heard the secret mournings of his soul; and for what crime was he subjected to this barbarous treatment?—because he had been found guilty of praying that I might recover from a dangerous illness. On that spot I vowed that I would proclaim, to the utmost of my power, the negro's wrongs.

To take the case of Sam, did he become idle when he was made free?—though stripes set him free! In one day I set him free—he became so idle as to build himself a house, and, when his wife was set up in the market for sale, he bid a large sum for her, and, after all, lost her. A dead set was made against him, and Sam has had to pay ten shillings a week for permission to have his wife to be with him. I remitted his case home, taking care, however, to have the particulars of it first printed in Jamaica. Every artifice was used to invalidate the evidence on the behalf of the slave, but truth triumphed; an order came out to remove the magistrates who committed the man, from the roll of his Majesty's officers of peace. I had myself once the happiness of freeing a slave; I say this because the planters accuse myself of being a slave-owner—I refer to the case of Amelia Sutherland, a member of my own church, with whom I have often sat down at the table of the Lord. She was taken a distance of 16 miles, and put into prison, for what? Her owner died in debt! She was sold in the street in which I lived. Having no money of my own, I went out and borrowed some, wherewith I procured her freedom; on bringing her home, before she sat down, I said, "Amelia Sutherland, you are free, I have no demand to make upon your services." The slave-holders, to implicate me in the crime of which they are guilty, bring forward documentary evidence of my having purchased the above slave, Amelia Sutherland; but let them look a little further forward, and they will see an entry made by me on the same day, or the next at latest, stating that "I, William Knibb, set free from all manner of servitude, the said Amelia Sutherland." And what becomes of this poor creature? Is she worthless? No! on setting her free, she said, "thank you, Minister, I pay you all back again, if I live!" She immediately betook herself to active exertion, taking in washing, &c., and regularly paid me 4*s.* a-week during the time that I remained upon the island. I have referred you now to individual cases; we shall now have some of larger growth. The planters send us to St. Domingo, and that is the very place to which I like to go. Before the British Parliament it has been proved that the negroes work, not by compulsion, not under the lash; there, says the witness, they live the happiest, and are the richest and best-fed negroes that I have seen in the West Indies—there is no comparison between the condition of the negro in St. Domingo and in Jamaica. I never saw a beggar in the streets in St. Domingo. Another witness says, that the people in St. Domingo are quiet and peaceable, not from the strict superintendance of the police, for there are none, and none are required, but from the naturally quiet and peaceable disposition of the people. No murders were ever committed there that ever I heard of—I must confess that I was surprised at finding such a state of society.

I will now go to another place. Mr. Austin, whose character has been so much defamed, for his defence of the murdered Missionary Smith, of Demerara, says respecting the *liberated* "negroes of Surinam," notwithstanding my intimate acquaintance with them for several years, I never saw them in liquor, and I consider them as the most moral set of negroes I ever met with. Turn next to America. It is not many years ago that ten thousand slaves were liberated in one of the States, in one day. Mr. Nathaniel Paul told me that he was present, and he did not observe one single instance of insubordination amongst them. It is but lately that 1,500 slaves were set free in our own crown colonies at once; Government provided, that in case any of the liberated negroes should turn lazy and were likely to suffer from want, they should be supplied out of the public stores. But what says the Governor of Antigua? "I am happy to state," he says, "that, during the five months that have elapsed since their manumission, not a single complaint has been preferred against them, and not one has applied for relief; but all have provided industriously for their own maintenance, and that of their families." The next case I state is one I bring forward on the authority of Mr. Jeremy. Some slaves, to the number of 150, fled from Martinique, and obtained refuge in St. Lucia; being pursued as "vagabonds, poisoners, and incendiaries," they were pretty strictly

watched; but so far from acting in consistency with the character their former masters had given them, part of them became carpenters, some masons, and others of them began a pottery, and supplied the islands with articles which they had been formerly obliged to import from Europe. Not one single case of insubordination had been observed amongst them. One of their number becoming sick, he was carefully tended by them. What now becomes of the statement of the planters?—either liberty had changed them so, that, from being vagabonds, poisoners, and incendiaries, they had become good and peaceful citizens, or the planters have been proved to be liars in denominating them such: on the horns of this dilemma they are placed, and there let them stick. But still the lovers of slavery will not desert their position—the negroes will not work if they are set free—(only let us try!) or if for a moment they yield to the influence of our arguments, they take up a still more absurd position, and say, they do not want to be set free. If they do not want to be set free, whence all your dread and alarm? But, let me make the experiment; let me carry to the West Indies the banner of freedom in the one hand and the awl in the other, to bore to the door-post the lovers of bondage, and I will warrant you the awl comes back as pure and as bloodless as it goes. If they do not want their freedom, why do they pay so dearly for it? if they do not love freedom, why is it, on great occasions, offered as a reward for services done? No, freedom is still prized above all price by the slave—the slave-holder has not yet succeeded in blotting out of the minds of their slaves, the first principles of the man—they have not and they *shall* not; for, ere they can effect their purpose, Britain will have liberated the slave. But they will murder us, the unwearied objector says; an idle fear this, indeed, and it reminds me strongly of that passage in the Bible, "the wicked fleeth when no man pursueth; but the righteous is bold as a lion." No wonder that they are afraid; no wonder that the transgressors of that positive injunction of the law of God, "He that stealeth a man and selleth him shall surely be put to death," are uneasy within. But they are alarmed at a shadow,—the negro, will not murder the whites,—else why have they not done it long ago; every six white persons sleep surrounded by 300 slaves, each, too, has a sharp knife in his hand, as long as my arm, which they use in cutting the canes; so that, if they were so wickedly disposed, they might on any night that they chose, enter the white men's houses and cut their throats whilst they were asleep. We are, moreover told, as an objection to their manumission, that there are so many of them! Do not let yourselves be deceived by the statements of the planters—they tell us it would be a dangerous thing to set at liberty 800,000 savages all at once. There are not so many savages in the West Indies, unless we reckon in all the whites. Besides, the islands are scattered, the ocean rolls between them; and, on the several islands, they are not all gathered into one spot; the 300,000 slaves of Jamaica are scattered over a surface 160 miles long, and 40 broad; and, besides, one half of them are women; and "conquerors returning from the seat of war," as the planters denominate themselves, are not afraid of women! another large portion of them are children, and another old slaves, and I do not think we need be alarmed by them: and, moreover, (thanks be to God!) we have more than 20,000 christian slaves amongst them, and they will not do the white men any harm. The insurrection has proved them to be the bulwark of the island. I am disgusted to think that a few planters should beard the whole of Britain! The planter has not been afraid to visit the coast of Africa and to tear the negro from his home and all its treasures; he is not afraid to cut the back of his fellow-creature with the lash, and then fill it with brine; and yet he is afraid to set the negro free—he is afraid to do that which God demands, which justice demands, which mercy beseeches, and which he ought to do instantly. Most true is the statement of the scriptures, "the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel," and never was it more completely exemplified than in the case of the planters; for they will now come forward and tell us that the slave ought not to be emancipated—for he will starve! But the fear is groundless, and the insinuation false; already they keep themselves and their masters too, and they help to support us Missionaries. In the Horticultural Society, which is established on the island, we often see the blacks contending with the whites, and carrying off the prizes allotted for excellence of produce.

On these various grounds, therefore, do I advocate the full and immediate abolition of slavery. I advocate immediate emancipation because it is just—the white man has no more right to enslave a black than a black has a right to make a slave of a white.—Why need we fear any consequences? Is there not a moral governor in the universe who will protect us if we do what is right. I defy you to prove any nation that has suffered in its interests for acting justly and mercifully—for doing that which is well-pleasing in the sight of God; whilst I can refer you to many that have been ruined by a contrary procedure.

I advocate immediate abolition, also, because it is the only way of getting rid of the question. You may make as many fine-spun theories as you please, but they will not work; the planters know this, and, therefore, they are gradual emancipationists. To take an example, suppose out of a gang of 300 slaves, it were proposed to set 20 free in the first instance, discontent would pervade the minds of the remaining 280; you would not be able to convince one of them that he was not as fit for immediate

emancipation as any of the 20, and the 20 would not work with their former bondmen because they do not like the association. Make it a law in England that felons were to work at any one employment you choose to name—say breaking stones upon the road—you would get no honest man to join them in their occupation, because he would feel that persons passing along the road would think he was as great a rogue as any of them. Now we have taught the negro to feel that the free man is above the slave, and the slave is beneath the feet of the free man; and the slave on attaining the envied elevation will not associate with slaves.

Besides, I advocate immediate emancipation because the slave has been expecting it for eight years. For eight years he has read in your newspapers the discussions of parliament on the subject so dear to his heart, and he has read your speeches at your meetings, and he has fancied that you meant what you said and that you would do it. Oh! remember that hope deferred maketh the heart sick. Notwithstanding, how many thousands of christian slaves in the West Indies have, under all this provocation, remained peaceable and quiet. They have comforted themselves, saying that when God sends their freedom he will send it in a proper manner. Are not the men who are capable of such a sentiment, and of putting so much constraint upon the strongest passions of our nature, fit for immediate freedom!

I come now to the punishment of the slave, and I must touch upon it, though I will be brief. On this subject I will relate the experience of a young man, the son of a clergyman, Mr. Charles Johnston, who went out to Jamaica under false impressions, but has recently arrived in this country, disgusted with what he has seen, and resolved to declare all that he has witnessed. And I can confirm his testimony on this subject in every particular.

He says he has seen persons of both sexes and of all ages exposed to the lash of the whip; children five years of age, and old men of seventy; that he has seen young women, just budding into life, and the mothers of large families, subjected to its tortures; and women also, in that state which of all others demands our tenderest care, most cruelly flogged. The application of the lash is not confined to the fleshy part of the back, it is sometimes inflicted on the neck and the face. The back of the unfortunate victim is furrowed with the whip—it is scored with it as with a knife; and whilst it yet bleeds from the murderous infliction rum and salt pickle are rubbed into it. I can confirm these statements by the evidence taken before the Committee of Parliament. J. B. Wildman, Esq., a large proprietor in the island of Jamaica, was asked what punishments were now in general use in Jamaica. Observe, he was asked what was the present state of things (1832). The planters often tell us, "Oh! this used to be the practice, but it is done away with." But here we have a slave-holder's testimony as to the present usages of the island. He says the punishments are very cruel; the general system is to inflict a certain number of dreadful lacerations or contusions with a whip, and then to follow this up with a flogging with ebony switches (a prickly plant), and after that to rub the back with brine; this is the custom he states in every part of the island. The same witness declares the jails to be exceedingly filthy; that the punishments of the slaves are little short of the inquisition; that in the workhouses the victims of the lash are frequently bowsed up, as the sailors say, with block and tackle; that in his presence one man was laid down to shew him the manner of proceeding, and that as they began to hoist him the poor fellow uttered a yell which, for the moment, terrified him. Charles Johnson says that the women are just as frequently flogged as the men, the only distinction made is that they are held down by persons of their own sex. J. B. Wildman says that a slave may be flogged to death and no punishment overtake his murderer. Since I left Jamaica a case of this kind has been published in the newspapers; John Kelly for refusing to lend his wife's horse, because it was lame, to the *overseer* was put into the stocks on Sunday, on the Monday he was flogged in such a manner as to cause his death within half an hour afterwards. A jury of brother planters was summoned to sit in inquest over the dead body of this man, and they brought in the verdict "died by the visitation of God." Not long ago the wife of a negro of the name of David Black came to complain to me of the dreadful condition of her husband; she said that he was very ill, and had received 203 lashes with that abominable cart-whip, because he preserved the virtue of a female and taught her to pray. One day as I sat at my door he approached me, so miserably altered was his appearance that I did not know him; he was handcuffed, and in his enfeebled state had been dragged 13 miles in the sun. His back was so sore that he was unable to put on his clothes, and his wife, for decency's sake, had thrown over him hers. I said to him David what have you done? Don't ask me, he said. I asked the man who had charge of him, and was told that the man had been praying. "And where are you going to take him?" "To the workhouse." A horrible place. I went to see him there and found him chained to a felon; his back still sore, and his wife's petticoat still round his back. The governor of the workhouse could not but say that the man was shamefully used; he had received orders to give him another flogging as soon as his back was fit to receive it. Now, I appeal to you my brethren, could I cease to expose such a system; could I die easy if I were; would not my brother's blood cry from the ground against me. Believe me, it

is only a firm principle of duty, of painful duty, that makes me stand forward as I now do and expose myself to the obloquy, and reproach, and scorn, of those who are interested in the continuation of the oppression of man.

The planters tell us there are no chains in Jamaica. I have seen chains; I have seen females in chains nearly every day; or if I have ceased to see them, it is because I have turned from beholding, sickened at the sight. Look at poor Catherine James.—She was tried as a runaway slave, though she had been a faithful slave for 45 years.—She told me that she had been kept in a dungeon for a considerable period, and during that time had been repeatedly flogged, because she prayed and taught her daughter to pray. Observing the door open one day, she ran out, and which of us would not have done the same. For this crime she was condemned to work all the remainder of her days in chains; she was a member of my own church; I durst not say to her you are very hardly treated; but now I dare, and I will say it, and I call upon you British females to bow down, one by one and altogether, and to vow eternal enmity to slavery, and entreat you never to cease to use that influence you so justly exercise upon British society until no one coming under the cognizance of British law, can buy, or sell, or hold, or be a slave.

With a few remarks, I will conclude.

Remember that whilst we are speaking, they are suffering; while we are hesitating, they are dying. Remember, when I plead for the emancipation of the slave, I plead for the emancipation of thousands, of tens of thousands of the children of our own countrymen. To such an awful pitch of depravity has slavery reduced society in the West Indies, that a man does not scruple to make slaves of his own children; I have seen them exposed for sale in a public market.

Do not get frightened by the alarms which the planters endeavour to raise. We are told that if the Government at home interferes with their affairs, the islands will go to America. How are they to go? by a steam-boat or a rail-road? But after all, this is the best thing they could do,—we would wish them speed on their journey, for we could do well without them; but they will not have all their own way—there are thirty or forty thousand free blacks on the islands who are quite determined that the islands shall retain their allegiance. Where is the cause for alarm? The islands have been fostered all along by England, and, to this day, we pay nearly three millions a-year to support British slavery in the West Indies. All this blustering of the planters reminds me of the case of a sturdy beggar, who comes thundering at the door and says, in an imperious tone, "if you do not relieve me here, I will go to the next parish."

There are some men who visit the West Indies, and who come back telling quite a different tale. They talk of the comforts and enjoyments of the slave, and tell of none of his sufferings. This is quite possible. A man to know the sufferings of the slave must make it his *business* to enquire into them. It is quite possible for a man to pay a visit to Newcastle, and having partaken of its hospitalities at some splendid board, to go away without knowing any thing of the miseries which may be suffered by the poor in its lanes and corners. Such persons remind me of the person who had travelled into Spain, and on his return said that all we had been told respecting the horrors of the inquisition was nonsense; that the windows were all clean, and the doors well painted, and that therefore there could be no gloomy dungeons within. You must enter the building, you must traverse its interior recesses, if you would descry its horrors. It does not do for gentlemen to go from one festive board to another, and trusting entirely to the representations of the planters themselves, come home and say, "'Pon honour, it is no such thing." They must enquire for themselves, and search to know the whole truth. It is because I have done this, that I plead for the immediate emancipation of the slave. I ask for justice, and for nothing less. I do not ask for more, because the slave does not ask it—he does not want it. With justice, indeed, he might demand a full compensation for all the wrongs he has endured, but this he foregoes. All he asks is that he may sustain the rank of a man—that he may call himself his own—his soul his own—his wife his own—his Minister his own—that the child may belong to the mother—the husband to the wife—and the wife to the husband—and that both may be permitted to bend the knee together before the common parent of all.

I do not belong to the Anti-slavery Society—I stand before you simply as the friend of the slave, and, as such, I plead for him. I told them that I would do so. Obloquy and reproach may fall upon me in consequence—violence and wrong may throw their darts against me—but I will not, as long as I have breath, cease my efforts in the behalf of injured Africa I will plead her cause until the wife of my African brethren is as free as mine—until his African children are as free as mine—and then I will die with the pleasing satisfaction that I have done what I could.

If any say that immediate emancipation will not do, the worst I would do to them would be to make them the slaves, and let the slaves flog them, and then quickly will they cry out for immediate emancipation.

NEWCASTLE:
PRINTED BY T. AND J. HODGSON, UNION STREET.

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LONDON.

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